

choice was not so hard for Wycliffe as it has often proved for others. He was no sensitive Erasmus. Proud and ascetic, he had ever despised the things of this world. A man of war from his youth up, the truth was always more to him than peace. He refused to be silent on the dangerous subject, and John of Gaunt retired from Oxford baffled. It would be interesting to know what thoughts were uppermost in the Duke's mind as he rode out of the town after this memorable interview.

Although, in arguing against the orthodox view of the Eucharist, Wycliffe put forward forcibly and even crudely the evidence of the senses, and laid stress on the absurdity of a useless miracle performed many times a day, often by the lowest type of priest,¹ he never went farther in his depreciation of the Sacrament than the position generally known as Consubstantiation. The Eucharist always presented to him a mystery. He believed the body was in some manner present, though how he did not clearly know ; he was only certain that bread was present also.²

With regard to the other Sacraments, Wycliffe depreciated the importance then attached to them, though he made an exception in favour of Matrimony. He himself did not propose to reduce their number, although the change effected by the Protestants of a later age was in perfect accord with his principles. It is unnecessary again to point out how very different was his view of Penance, Extreme Unction and Holy Orders from that of the Catholic Church. We find, in Waldensis* confutation of Lollardry, that, as we should suppose from a perusal of Wycliffe's own works, the distinguishing feature of the sect was a depreciation of the miraculous power of the Church Sacraments, and the peculiar saving qualities of ceremonies, prayers, and pardons. Wycliffe pointed out that there was another road to salvation, —a godly life. He thought the religious world had been led astray, and in pursuit of formulas was forgetting the essence of Christianity. The direct relation of the individual to God

¹ f. 100. E. W. iii. 405; *Dialogus*, iv. 5; *De Blasphemiis*, 26-30; *D** *Eucharistia et Pcenitentia*, p. 329 of the *De J&ucharistid*.
² *De Eucharistid*, *passim*, and Introduction.